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Chairman: Mr. DINU (Romania)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 103: REVIEW OF THE EFFICIENCY OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL FUNCTIONING OF THE UNITED NATIONS (continued) (A/C.5/47/16, A/C.5/46/CRP.1, A/46/327 and Corr.1 and Add.1)

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1. Mr. PENEV (Bulgaria) said that his delegation strongly supported the steps taken by the Secretary-General to reorganize the Secretariat with a view to improving its capacity to work for the effective fulfilment of the purposes of the Charter and the mandates issued by policy-making organs.

2. The financial implications of that process were also important. The Secretary-General deserved commendation for having abolished 12 high-level posts financed from the regular budget, with resulting savings estimated at $4.4 million.

3. One aspect of the ongoing process of reform which was even more significant than the financial savings was the related improvements in the Organization's performance. The restructuring must not impair but rather augment the Organization's capacity to carry out its mandates. Bulgaria vigorously backed the efforts of the Secretariat to ensure that any temporary negative effects, unavoidable in such a far-reaching reorganization, did not affect the overall capability to implement the mandates and achieve the aims of the Organization.

4. The restructuring should also reach the lower levels of the Secretariat with respect both to the redeployment of staff and to the creation of opportunities for further financial savings. Bulgaria also supported the closer focus on priority areas achieved by consolidating and rationalizing the use of existing resources. A more rigorous assessment of the current needs and of the means of meeting them would be welcome, with a view to enhancing the Organization's capacity in the establishment and maintanence of peace, security and stability, and in economic and social development.

5. The Bulgarian delegation therefore endorsed the increased emphasis on preventive diplomacy, crisis management and post-conflict peace-building, and it called for more attention to be given to the protection of justice and human rights throughout the world and to humanitarian, social and economic activities. The Secretary-General was to be commended for addressing the relationship between social, humanitarian and human rights issues and policies, and his concept of the integrated treatment of all development

(Mr. Penev, Bulgaria)

issues deserved support. Equally praiseworthy were the efforts of the Secretariat to establish a more dynamic relationship between personnel resources and mandated activities, including the progressive introduction of scientific techniques such as workload analysis.

6. Mr. KHAN (Bangladesh) said that his delegation had studied the revised estimates requested by the General Assembly in resolutions 46/185 and 46/232 (A/C.5/47/2 and Corr.1) which covered only the financial aspects of the restructuring of the Secretariat initiated by the Secretary-General in February 1992. The restructuring process had reduced the number of high-level posts financed from the regular budget from 48 to 36, with savings of $4.4 million. The first phase of the reorganization had covered 54 per cent of the 3,840 Professional posts and 58.9 per cent of the 6,225 General Service posts. In budgetary terms the restructuring and consolidation of offices represented $1,490 million, i.e., 48.1 per cent of the budget for 1992-1993. Although the restructuring had been based on the report of the Group of High-level Intergovernmental Experts to Review the Efficiency of the Administrative and Financial Functioning of the United Nations, its scale had been of greater magnitude, especially in the areas of political and Security Council affairs, economic and social development, and humanitarian affairs. Although it was still too early to judge the results, his delegation entertained high hopes for them.

7. However, the reform was not an end in itself, and the reduction of expenditure could not be the sole aim. The main objective of any reform ought to be to increase the Organization's efficiency and ensure programme implementation with a good cost/benefit ratio. His delegation would therefore have liked to receive, together with the information on the financial implications of the restructuring, an account of the programmatic impact accompanied by revised estimates.

8. In the context of the far-reaching reform of the Organization his delegation called for greater attention to be given to improvement of the effectiveness of the United Nations role in the economic and social spheres, for it was of vital importance for the developing countries. Peace, security and development constituted an indivisible whole. However, it could be seen that not enough was being done in the economic and social spheres, and the situation must be corrected. In that connection the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s (resolution 45/206), approved by the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, constituted the frame of reference for combating the deterioration in the economic, social and environmental situation of the least developed countries. The Programme of Action stipulated the shared responsibility of those countries and their development partners and the important role of the United Nations system. It was to be hoped that the programme budget and the medium-term plan would continue to give high priority to the needs of the least developed countries.

(Mr. Khan, Bangladesh)

9. Associated with the restructuring process was the question of vacancy management in the context of the difficulty of establishing a precise relationship between staff resources, specific mandated activities, imperfect workload analysis, underfinancing of the regular budget and the ever-increasing new mandated activities given to the Organization. There was a need to establish an internal procedure for examining vacant posts bearing in mind the need for flexibility in the management of personnel resources. It should also be borne in mind that the suspension of recruitment to posts in the Professional category begun in February 1992 might have an adverse programmatic impact: when posts were redeployed and resources were transferred on such a large scale, their total impact on programme delivery must be given serious consideration. He therefore urged the Secretariat to develop rational criteria and justification for such redeployment keeping in mind the long-term needs of the departments and avoiding ad hoc short-term exigencies.

10. In the context of a fast-changing world scenario, the question of redundant programmes and programmes of marginal importance had been raised. That question was linked with the question of priorities. The medium-term plan had clearly mentioned five priority areas: maintenance of international peace and security; the economic development of developing countries; the economic recovery and development of Africa; the environment and international drug control. There was therefore no need to redefine priorities; the balance which such priorities represented should not be disturbed. Bangladesh supported the recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) in that area as well as the proposals with respect to the priorities between subprogrammes approved recently by the Trade and Development Board at Geneva. Regarding the 13 posts of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) mentioned in document A/C.5/47/7, Bangladesh agreed with the proposal of the Secretary-General to extend them through 1993 and make proposals concerning their future status in the context of programme budget proposals for the biennium 1994-1995. His delegation also hoped that the recommendations of the Cartagena Commitment adopted by UNCTAD at its eighth session would be fully respected in any recommendations to be made in that regard.

11. His delegation respected the role and authority of the Secretary-General as Chief Executive Officer of the Organization and supported his efforts to enhance the Organization's efficiency, streamline the Secretariat, avoid duplication and waste and rationalize the departments and programme delivery in a cost-effective way. Nevertheless, there were many cases of mismanagement, waste, duplication and corruption. The accountability of programme managers must be emphasized. Programme performance reports should be improved further with analytical reports and assessments of programme implementation. In-depth evaluations and dissemination of the lessons learnt from programme execution were an important instrument to improve programme performance. However, he agreed with the observation of the Chairman of CPC that evaluation remained a neglected child of the United Nations management, and he expressed the hope that work in that area would improve.

(Mr. Khan, Bangladesh)

12. Restructuring should be done within the framework of the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant General Assembly resolutions. A piecemeal approach to restructuring was not helpful; when reforms continued over a prolonged period, the result was uncertainty, lack of direction and low staff morale. His delegation therefore wished to see a speedy conclusion to the process of reform and restructuring and agreed with the representative of Japan about the need for dialogue with Member States in that regard.

13. The medium-term plan was one of the main policy-making instruments and served as a basis for biennial programme budget formulation. His delegation supported any steps that would make that process simpler and more transparent and welcomed the prototype of a new budget format (A/C.5/47/3); it also supported the holding of a technical seminar as recommended by CPC to review the medium-term plan.

14. The Earth Summit had led to a new approach to the environment and development. Indiscriminate industrialization had already destroyed part of the ozone layer, increased the incidence of cancer and created a greenhouse effect leading to global warming. Global warming could have very dangerous consequences, counting droughts in Africa and raising the sea levels; that situation would directly affect the lowlands of Bangladesh and cause untold suffering to its people. It was estimated that up to one third of Bangladesh's territory could be submerged and that about one third of its population would become homeless and lose its livelihood.

15. Developed and developing countries were equally responsible for the deterioration of the environment. Over the past 10 years, enormous tracts of forest had been destroyed. Extreme poverty led to the cutting down of trees with subsequent harmful environmental consequences. Bangladesh was proud of having launched, over the previous two years, a vast reforestation programme under which millions of trees had been planted.

16. Regarding the procedures and norms for the creation, elimination, reclassification, conversion and redeployment of posts (A/C.5/47/4) his delegation agreed with CPC that it lacked substance and needed more work.

17. Mr. OSELLA (Argentina) speaking on behalf of the Rio Group, namely, the delegations of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela, said he wished to comment on the proposed revisions to the medium-term plan (A/47/16 (Part II)). He agreed on the need to simplify the format of the plan and the procedures for its revision, so as to preserve its strategic nature as part of the budget cycle. He therefore welcomed the initiative of holding a technical seminar, without additional cost to the Organization, to help improve the format of and revisions to the plan. The main aspects of the revision of the plan would depend on the decisions to be taken by the General Assembly in response to the decisions adopted at the eighth session of UNCTAD and at the United Nations Conference on Environment

(Mr. Osella, Argentina)

and Development, as well as on the restructuring of the economic and social sectors of the Organization. The specialized intergovernmental bodies must play an appropriate role in the drafting and revision of the medium-term plan; in that connection, the contribution of the the Trade and Development Board to the revisions now before the Committee was a welcome exception. He stressed that the medium-term plan must be based on officially agreed intergovernmental mandates and that, in the absence of such mandates, Secretariat reports or memoranda could not serve as a legislative basis.

18. With regard to programme 1 (Good offices and peacemaking, peace-keeping, research and the collection of information), the introduction of new political concepts into the budget and programme process should be governed by the relevant definitions adopted by the General Assembly. That was particularly relevant to the concepts of fact-finding and peacemaking. Given that the concept of preventive diplomacy was currently being considered by various intergovernmental bodies, the revisions to the plan should make it clear that General Assembly decisions on the subject were pending.

19. With regard to programme 4 (Special political questions, trusteeship and decolonization) he felt that the original title of subprogramme 3 should be retained. As to the reference to regional organizations in paragraph 4.28, he felt that United Nations cooperation with such organizations should be in accordance with their respective mandates.

20. Commenting on programme 12 (Global development issues and policies), he said that the wording proposed by the Secretariat for the programme showed that there was still confusion in some areas between the functions of the Department of Economic and Social Development and those of other offices and agencies in the system. It was particularly important to take account of the decisions to be adopted by the General Assembly on the follow-up to the eighth session of UNCTAD and the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

21. With regard to programmes 13 (Trade and development), 14 (Trade expansion, export promotion and service sector development) and 15 (Least developed, land-locked and island developing countries, and special programmes), he welcomed the fact that a specialized intergovernmental body, the Trade and Development Board, had revised the Secretariat's proposals, to ensure that the programmes reflected the outcome of the eighth session of UNCTAD; he welcomed the revisions made by the Board, as well as the priorities it had subsequently recommended. In addition, it was vital that UNCTAD should revise the programmes, in conjunction with other organizations in the system, so as to define responsibilities for matters that were of crucial importance to the developing world.

22. With regard to programme 17 (Science and technology for sustainable development) he felt that the environment, as an important aspect of development, should be incorporated in the title and text of the programme.

(Mr. Osella, Argentina)

However, the revision initially proposed by the Secretariat seemed to take too narrow a view, making the environment the sole objective of the scientific and technological activities to be pursued by the Organization. As many of those activities were not directly related to environmental concerns, the original spirit of the programme should be preserved. A corollary of that broader approach was the need to retain the original titles of the programme (Science and technology for development) and of subprogramme 1 (Endogenous capacity-building and resource mobilization).

23. With regard to programme 28 (International drug control), a thorough assessment was needed of the progress made by the Organization in the sector, given the complexity of the problems to be tackled and the specific characteristics of its institutional and financial arrangements.

24. With regard to programme 33 (Regional cooperation for development in Latin America and the Caribbean), he supported the revision of the programme proposed by the Secretariat, since it recognized regional integration and the fight against drug trafficking as spheres of action of the regional commission, bearing in mind its specific institutional mandate. Strengthening the economic ties between the countries of the region was vital for the economic and social development of their peoples. In that respect, ECLAC would help to formulate regional positions better geared to development objectives.

25. With regard to programme 38 (Public information) it was important to ensure that the original mandate of the information centres was not altered by the transfer to the Department of Public Information of the functions of the former Office for Research and the Collection of Information. The institutional arrangements should therefore be revised to enable the Department of Public Information to discharge those new functions.

26. Mr. CHUINKAM (Cameroon) welcomed the restructuring of the Secretariat undertaken by the Secretary-General, but hoped that the exercise would not marginalize certain Member States or lead to a redeployment of resources according to priorities other than those agreed by all Member States. While he welcomed the savings resulting from the reduction in high-level posts, he believed they should be only a by-product of restructuring and not its main aim. There were grounds for wondering whether the organizational changes were really aimed at ensuring effective implementation of mandates. In particular, the new Department of Economic and Social Development had been overloaded with activities, while at the same time its resources were being redeployed to other sectors.

27. It was high time the Secretary-General lifted the temporary suspension of recruitment to posts in the Professional category, which was no longer justified now that the restructuring of the Secretariat had been completed. As the Secretary-General had pointed out, the staff resources of the Organization were, in many domains of activity, stretched to the limit.

(Mr. Chuinkam, Cameroon)

28. However, instead of recruiting additional staff within the limits provided for in the budget, the Secretary-General was asking for a certain degree of flexibility in the management of staff resources. His delegation was not prepared to authorize the Secretary-General to transfer or redeploy resources between sections of the budget without the prior approval of the General Assembly or the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ). The existing procedure whereby the Secretary-General consulted with the General Assembly during its sessions, and with the Advisory Committee between sessions, gave him the necessary flexibility to deal with the changing needs and circumstances of the United Nations.

29. He regretted that the Secretary-General's report lacked adequate information on the matter, thus obliging ACABQ to postpone its opinion. The Secretary-General was calling on the General Assembly and ACABQ to take a decision on the proposed new approach before the practical modalities for implementing it had been elaborated.

30. He was pleased to note that the pace of work in the construction of the additional conference facilities at Addis Ababa, had improved and that the total costs of the Addis Ababa and Bangkok projects would not exceed the amounts originally authorized in the budget for 1992-1993. The contractors should be cautioned against using flimsy excuses to delay the termination of projects in order to obtain more money from the United Nations. It might be advisable to consider the possibility of revising the relevant clauses of the contracts in order to avoid such situations.

31. With regard to the granting of travel assistance to least developed countries that were members of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (A/47/454), the predicaments of those countries would persist because the Commission had not been able to rationalize its work as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 46/56 B. The Fifth Committee should recommend to the General Assembly that travel assistance should be granted to those countries.

AGENDA ITEM 112: PERSONNEL QUESTIONS (continued) (A/47/416 and A/47/508; A/C.5/47/5, A/C.5/47/6, A/C.5/47/9, A/C.5/47/14 and A/C.5/47/20; A/C.5/46/2, A/C.5/46/7, A/C.5/46/9, A/C.5/46/13 and A/C.5/46/16; A/46/326 and Corr.1 and Add.1, A/47/140 and Add.1 and A/47/168 and Add.1)

32. Mr. PENEV (Bulgaria) expressed his delegation's concern at the grave disparity in representation resulting from the coincidence of the freeze in recruitment imposed at the beginning of 1992 and the admission of an unprecedented number of new Member States. It had, in particular, affected the Eastern European Group, which included 15 unrepresented States and only 9 within range. Urgent measures should be taken to remedy that situation.

33. Another source of concern was the negative trend over the past five years with regard to the equitable geographical representation of Member States in

(Mr. Peney, Bulgaria)

the Secretariat. There had been a sharp increase in the number of unrepresented countries, while the percentage of underrepresented countries had remained more or less stable at a high level. The number of countries within range had reached the lowest figure in the past five years while the proportion of overrepresented States had increased. That trend must be radically reversed.

34. The measures taken by the Secretary-General to improve the status of women in the Secretariat were to be commended. The national competitive examinations could be a valuable factor in improving the representation of women while not compromising on the need to secure the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity. Intensified efforts by the Administration and programme managers, and greater cooperation from Member States were also needed.

35. He shared the view that membership, population and contribution should be the main criteria for the equitable distribution of posts. Full parity should gradually be established between the membership and contribution factors. Option J in the Secretary-General's report (A/C.5/46/2) could serve as a final long-term goal. The increase in both relative and absolute terms in the number of posts to be distributed according to the membership factor was justified by the increase in the number of Member States.

36. His delegation agreed that there was a need for a certain flexibility in calculating the desirable ranges. However, under the current methodology, the flexibility factor of 15 per cent had been replaced by a fixed number of 4.8 posts for a majority of States. In many instances that was equal to nearly 70 per cent of their respective mid-points. It would be desirable, therefore, for the upper and lower limits of each range to be more closely linked to the mid-point.

37. His delegation welcomed the expansion of the national competitive examinations through the holding of examinations for posts at the P-3 level in 1991 and 1992, and endorsed the policies and procedures devised in that connection. Bulgaria would be holding national competitive examinations in the near future.

38. His delegation fully shared the concern expressed by the Secretary-General in his report on the privileges and immunities of officials of the United Nations and the specialized agencies and related organizations (A/C.5/47/14), and by the staff representatives of the Secretariat in document A/C.5/47/20, especially with regard to the security of United Nations personnel. There was a pressing need to afford adequate protection to United Nations staff members carrying out their duties in dangerous circumstances. He strongly supported the Secretary-General's recommendations in the aforementioned report and in his report "An Agenda for Peace" (A/47/277).

39. Mr. TOYAMA (Japan) said that the safety and security of United Nations staff had become a matter of great concern because of increasing involvement by the United Nations in peace-keeping and humanitarian missions in areas where there was danger. His delegation strongly supported the statement by the former Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management that the organizations of the United Nations system had a joint responsibility to ensure the safety and security of staff and that they should accordingly provide the necessary contingency planning. A plan should also be formulated to ensure generous compensation for the families of staff members who died on such missions. In that connection, consideration should be given to augmenting the current United Nations compensation scheme by additional private insurance.

40. With regard to the composition of the Secretariat, he noted that the two most important events of the reporting period had been the restructuring of the Secretariat and the consequent temporary freeze on external recruitment to fill vacant posts in the Professional category. While his delegation recognized the need to freeze recruitment during the review of the staffing tables in connection with the restructuring it believed that the restructuring should take fully into account the current unsatisfactory situation with regard to equitable geographical distribution. According to the Secretary-General's report (A/47/416), of the 128 appointments made during the reporting period to posts subject to geographical distribution, only 29, or 22.7 per cent, had been of nationals of unrepresented or underrepresented Member States. Ten years previously, the proportion had been 43.2 per cent. That showed that the situation had deteriorated and that special measures should be taken; for example, the recruitment of nationals from unrepresented or underrepresented Member States should be exempted from the freeze.

41. His delegation also requested the Secretary-General to expand the use of national competitive examinations, since the ratio of appointments to posts at the P-1, P-2 and P-3 levels by means of national competitive examinations during the reporting period had been less than 50 per cent when it should be almost 100 per cent. The process of recruitment by competitive examination should also be speeded up since many highly qualified candidates who did well in the examination became discouraged by the long wait and lost interest in working for the United Nations. In that connection, the plan referred to by the former Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management, Mr. Ciss, aimed at accelerating the process so as to complete it within four months of the identification of vacancies, was interesting.

42. The training of Secretariat staff was critical at a time when the United Nations was undertaking many new activities, and staff members had to upgrade their knowledge as their missions changed. It was surprising that only 0.27 per cent of total staff costs was allocated to occupational and management training in the Secretariat, a ratio that was one eighth of that at the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank. Japan strongly supported the development of the comprehensive management development plan referred to by the former Assistant

(Mr. Toyama, Japan)

Secretary-General in his statement, and it was ready to provide all possible assistance in carrying out that plan.

43. With respect to career development, his delegation noted with interest the submission of proposals for the long-term project in that area. However, it reserved the right to comment on them once his Government had thoroughly examined them.

44. Regarding the representation of women, his delegation requested the Secretariat to give priority to the recruitment of women from underrepresented or unrepresented Member States.

45. As to desirable ranges, they were nothing more than a means of achieving equitable geographical distribution. The General Assembly should not expend effort in discussing methodologies but should rather address the broader question of how to ensure that the Secretariat strengthened its recruitment policy in order to achieve the original objective: equitable geographical distribution.

46. Mrs. SUVARNATEMEE (Thailand) observed that unfortunately many States were underrepresented and some even unrepresented. Her delegation, which advocated the strict observance of geographical distribution in the recruitment process, hoped that the Secretary-General would eventually correct that imbalance. Thailand supported an extensive restructuring of the Secretariat, extending even to the highest levels. Nationals from some States must not be allowed to have a monopoly over top positions. Thailand suggested that a time-limit should be put on the terms for senior posts in order to promote a more just geographical distribution within the United Nations system.

47. Although it was not easy to achieve a more diverse geographical representation, there was no need to increase the number of posts in order to eliminate underrepresentation. Any increase in United Nations staff should result strictly from an expansion of the Organization's activities.

48. With regard to staff training, it was surprising that the United Nations was spending only 0.27 per cent of its staff costs on training. There should be an increase in funding for training at the management level.

49. As to the issue of the advancement of women in the Secretariat, her delegation urged the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to achieve the goals set in General Assembly resolution 45/125, according to which the overall participation of women would rise to 35 per cent by 1995 and to 25 per cent for posts at the D-1 level and above. As of 30 June 1992, however, there were no women at the Under-Secretary-General level, while 19 men occupied such posts. Only one woman was at the Assistant Secretary-General level compared to 14 men. At the D-2 level, there were 17 men and only 10 women, and at the D-1 level there were 26 women and 216 men. It was important to remedy the situation, and the career development system would be a useful tool in placing women in posts at all levels.

50. Mr. WLOSOWICZ (Poland) said that the policy and practice of human resources management must be adjusted to all the new problems facing the United Nations and the world community.

51. On the question of the geographical distribution of posts, as indicated in the report of the Secretary-General (A/47/416), only 2,608 posts out of the total 31,127 United Nations posts were subject to geographical distribution.

52. His delegation was of the opinion that the composition of the civilian components of various peace-keeping missions should be based on as wide a geographical distribution as possible. Poland had experienced some difficulties that year in placing its nationals in the civilian structures of peace-keeping missions, and felt that the problem required greater attention on the part of the Secretariat.

53. A whole group of countries remained only marginally represented, in the structures of the United Nations development system, where "new blood" was especially needed. Those were the countries in transition, which had much to learn by direct participation in the operations of the system. To remedy that situation it would be useful to have a clear breakdown by nationality of the personnel tables submitted by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly.

54. In order to achieve broad and equitable geographical distribution of staff, equal opportunity should be given to internal and external candidates and vacancy announcements should be issued and distributed in time. Since internal promotion had become the basic method of filling vacancies, some posts were advertised very late. His delegation reiterated its support for the system of competitive examinations. The report under review, however, did not indicate whether the plan was to hold examinations in 1993.

55. On the question of secondment, Poland was of the opinion that the system could be beneficial to both the United Nations and Member States, since it provided the Organization with a kind of support it might not be able to develop internally. The basis of secondment was a tripartite agreement that should be respected by the three parties involved: the United Nations Secretariat, the Government concerned and the staff member working for the United Nations on secondment.

56. Concerning the representation of women in the Secretariat, despite some progress towards the 35-per-cent target, the status of women in the United Nations was far from encouraging, and it was to be hoped that the Secretariat would continue taking effective measures to correct that situation while fully respecting the principle of equitable geographical distribution.

AGENDA ITEM 111: SCALE OF ASSESSMENTS FOR THE APPORTIONMENT OF THE EXPENSES OF THE UNITED NATIONS (A/47/11)

57. Mr. ALI (Chairman of the Committee on Contributions), introducing the report of the Committee on Contributions, said that at its fifty-second session it had dealt with the assessments of new Member States and with several aspects of the scale methodology.

58. With the exception of San Marino, the establishment of assessments for the new Member States had presented the Committee with the unprecedented task of proposing rates for States which had previously been part of the former Soviet Union and the former Yugoslavia. The Committee had decided to do so without affecting the rates of other Member States and on the basis of a uniform approach using available national income and population figures for the years 1980-1989, which constituted the statistical base underlying the current scale of assessments. On the basis of those data, the proportional share of the combined rates of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine had been calculated for each of the former Soviet Republics. In that manner, all 15 States had benefited proportionately from the ad hoc adjustment of 20 points from 11.10 per cent to 10.90 per cent. An ad hoc adjustment had been made to the rate of the former Soviet Union in 1991, prior to the distribution of 10.90 per cent among Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine for the purposes of the current scale of assessments. The Committee had included Belarus and Ukraine in the current exercise so as to achieve a uniform approach, mindful of the unique manner in which the rates for Belarus and Ukraine had been determined since 1946.

59. The rates proposed for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Slovenia had also been calculated on the basis of available national income and population data.

60. The rate proposed for San Marino was identical to that approved by the General Assembly in 1991 before it had been a Member of the Organization.

61. The Committee on Contributions had made the proposals contained in its report in full awareness of the concerns expressed to it in written or verbal representations by Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, the Republic of Moldova, Slovenia and Ukraine. Those Member States had stressed their current economic difficulties and the distorting effect of the rouble exchange rates used. The Committee sympathized with many of those concerns, but it had had to work within constraints that had prevented it from taking current circumstances sufficiently into account. Those deficiencies would be addressed in the context of the next scale, once detailed information on national income, population and exchange rates had been provided by all Member States. The Committee thus viewed its recommendations as an unavoidable transitional step, recognizing that the rates of assessment of the 19 States formerly comprising the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia might undergo considerable adjustment in the preparation of the next scale.

(Mr. Ali)

62. The Committee had prepared illustrative machine scales after careful consideration of the use of uniform exchange rates, debt-adjusted income, a low per capita income allowance formula with a per capita income limit of the average world per capita income and a gradient of 100 per cent, and a method for phasing out the scheme of limits. Annexes I to III showed the results of the application of those factors together with three different approaches to phasing out the scheme of limits. The results achieved through all three approaches demonstrated that most of the effects of the scheme of limits could be eliminated over 2 three-year scale periods. However, the data in annexes I to III must be viewed as strictly indicative.

63. With regard to improvements in the methodology for future scales, the Committee had reviewed its work over the past 12 years on adjustments to national and per capita income in the calculation of the scale of assessments so as to better capture the capacity to pay of Member States. The Committee had recalled the limitations of the indicator approach and the difficulties encountered in selecting appropriate indicators, and had reached agreement on the necessary weights and norms for specific indicators while trying to avoid the danger of double counting and other conceptual problems. The Committee had also explored alternative income concepts, one of which had been used in the preparation of the illustrative scales in annexes I to III to the report.

64. The Committee on Contributions had also considered a progress report on the further development of price-adjusted rates of exchange (PARE), which was summarized in annex IV to the report.

65. Lastly, the Committee had also addressed the question of alternative scale methodologies. In that connection it had recalled a 1986 study on alternative methodologies which had reviewed the methodologies used by other organizations and identified six approaches which were not based on the capacity to pay of member States. At its most recent session the Committee had considered a model scale using a statistical base period of 10 years, which, as mandated in resolution 46/221 D, would be arrived at by distributing average national income weighted by per capita national income, and the calculation of which would be followed by the application of the existing floor and ceiling rates. The Committee on Contributions had been divided as to the validity of that scale, shown in column 5 of annex V to the report.

66. Mr. BURAVKIN (Belarus) said that his delegation firmly supported the basic principles and criteria by which the Committee on Contributions was guided in allocating the expenses of the United Nations among Member States in accordance with their capacity to pay. Capacity to pay, determined on the basis of objective information on national income, should be the key criterion in determining the assessment rate of each State. Accordingly, there had been no reason to think that the Committee on Contributions, at its most recent session (15 June-2 July 1992), would diverge from the unconditional application of that criterion in determining the assessment rates for the new States which had emerged on the territory of the former Soviet Union and had

(Mr. Buravkin, Belarus)

been admitted to the United Nations. Belarus, which did not doubt the professionalism and competence of the members of the Committee on Contributions, expected the Committee to formulate new methodological suggestions and approaches which might have found practical application in establishing and developing civilized relations within the Commonwealth of Independent States. Regrettably, that had not happened. It should be noted that the Committee itself had admitted the vulnerability of some of its conclusions. His delegation firmly believed that the Committee had made a gross conceptual and methodological error which had led to erroneous conclusions and recommendations unacceptable to his delegation.

67. For inexplicable reasons the Committee on Contributions had left unaddressed the political and economic situation of one sixth of the territory of the Earth, where, over a very short time, the once-unified economic complex of the former super-Power had collapsed. Belarus was not convinced of the appropriateness of assessing the contributions of the new States Members of the United Nations by linking them from the outset to the distribution among those States of the contribution of the former Soviet Union.

68. Moreover, it had been a surprise to his delegation to learn, on the eve of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, that, by the will of the Committee on Contributions, Belarus, one of the founding Members of the Organization, suddenly found itself among the new States Members of the United Nations. Whatever explanations the Committee on Contributions might offer for its recommendation that the assessment of Belarus should increase 1.5 times (from 0.31 to 0.48 per cent), a number of factors must be noted. Firstly, the financial obligations of Belarus towards the United Nations had already been determined under the scale of assessments for the years 1992, 1993 and 1994 established in General Assembly resolution 46/221, which had been adopted by consensus. The recommendation of the Committee on Contributions that the assessments of Belarus and of Ukraine should be increased was directed, in effect, at revising a scale of assessments adopted by consensus. Accordingly, his delegation considered the recommendation of the Committee on Contributions that the assessment for Belarus should increase from 0.31 to 0.48 per cent to be inappropriate, and called upon the Fifth Committee to seek ways of eliminating that injustice.

The meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.